THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Government are aware of the traditional rights of Indian fishermen for access and pilgrimage, as guaranteed under the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement of 1974. These traditional rights include access to Kachchativu for resting, drying their nets and attending the annual St. Anthony's festival. These traditional rights, however, do not include the right to fish in and around Kachchativu.

(b) The fulfilment of the traditional rights of Indian fishermen has been in abeyance since 1983 due to adverse security conditions in the Palk Straits. From time to time, the Government have pointed out to Sri Lanka Government that our fishermen would like to enjoy these rights in an unhindered manner. The Question of the restoration of traditional rights of Indian fishermen for access to Kachchativu area, as guaranteed under the Indo-Sri Lanka Maritime Agreements of 1974 and 1976, remains under discussion between the two Governments.

Infected wastes discharged from hospitals and nursing homes

*207. SHRI JAGMOHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the rising menace of solid waste, particularly the infected waste from hospitals and nursing homes;

(b) whether this has casued a serious threat to public health and environment;

(c) whether any Central law is proposed to be enacted to tackle the problem; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) Yes Sir.

(c) Government have notified the draft Bio-Medical Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 1995 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. These have been published as Draft Rules for information of the public and concerned agencies likely to be affected, inviting objections from them within a period of sixty days from the date the notification is made available to them. The final notification is required to be issued after considering these suggestions.

(d) Does not arise.

Sale of Sophisticated Submarines by France to Pakistan

*208 DR. RANBIR SINGH:
SHRI RAMNATH KOVIND:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reported deal under negotiation for sale of sophisticated submarines Agosta-90 by France to Pakistan who is engaged in a proxy war against India by way of aiding and abetting terrorism in several parts of India including Jammu and Kashmir; and

(b) if so, whether Government have taken up with French Government impressing upon that Government to desist from sale of these submarines to Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir. On 21 September 1994, Pakistan concluded a contract with France for the purchase of three 90-B Agosta Class submarines.

(b) We have taken up the matter with the Government of France and conveyed our concerns regarding their decision to sell Agosta 90-B submarines to Pakisatn, pointing out the adverse impact this will have on our security and on regional stability.

RMS Office at Bargarh in Orissa

*209. SHRI JANARDAN YADAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether an office of the RMS (Railway Mail Service) located in the Bargarh town of Orissa was closed down some years ago;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the local people or organisations have represented to Government to reopen the office; and

(d) if so, the action taken or proposed to be taken by Government on it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes, Sir. The Sorting Office at Bargarh was closed down in 1980.

(b) The prescribed norm for opening of a sorting office was not satisfied by the volume of mail. Routeing of mails through the proposed office at Bargarh would also result in delay to mails as compared to the present arrangement.

(c) There was a request on behalf of the local people in August 1993 and from Postal Union for reopeing the Sorting Office at Bargarh.

(d) As in (b) above.

Report of the Human Rights Commission on Atrocities in Punjab

*210. SHRI TRILOKI NATH CHATURVEDI:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn by the Human Rights Commission to a large number of cases where innocent persons in Punjab were killed by the Security Forces and also cases of sufferings caused by the police atrocities and if so, the action taken on each case so far; and

(b) whether the Human Rights Commission has suo moto taken any action on the cases of human rights violation in Punjab or elsewhere in 1994 and so far in 1995 and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S.B. CHAVAN): (a) As per available information the National Human Rights Commission has received no complaint of innocent persons in Punjab having been killed by the Security Forces. The Commission had, however, till 30 June, 1995, received 215 complaints against Punjab Police alleging violation of human rights. These include cases of custodial deaths, disappearances, illegal detentions and other police excesses. These complaints have been takan up by the NHRC with the Government of Punjab.

(b) The National Human Rights Commission has taken cognizance suo motu in respect of 43 cases of reported human rights violations in Punjab till 30 June, 1995. These include 19 cases of alleged custodial deaths and 24 cases of other alleged police excesses. Out of 19 cases of alleged custodial deaths, reports have been received in 9 cases, and NHRC proceedings in respect of one has been concluded. Reports are awaited in the remaining 10 cases. As for the cases of alleged police excesses, report has been received in one case. The Commission is persuing the remaining cases with State Government.

Elsewhere in the country, the Commission has taken suo motu action in 324 cases of alleged human reights violations till 30 June, 1995. The cases include allegations certaining to jail conditions, police excesses, child labour, indignity to women, misuse of TADA Act, custodial deaths, custodial rape and others. Reports have been received from the concerned authorities in 173 cases of which NHRC proceedings in respect of 70 cases have been concluded. Reports are awaited in 151 cases which are being persued by the Commission.

UN Climate Conference held in Berlin

*211. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA:
SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state the stand Indian delegation took to the proposed German Protocol to the convention bracketing India, with the developed countries for limiting green house gases at the UN Climate Conference held in Berlin?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): India reiterated the principles contained in the Framework Covention on Climate Change with specific reference to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and respective capabilities to protect the climate system. Further, India emphasised the point that the per capita emissions in the developing countries were still relatively low and that the share of global emissions originating in developing countries is bound to grow to meet